



**ANNUAL REPORT OF
THE HUMANITARIAN / RESIDENT COORDINATOR
ON THE USE OF CERF GRANTS**

Country	Colombia
Humanitarian / Resident Coordinator	Mr Bruno Moro
Reporting Period	2007

I. Executive Summary

In 2007, heavy 28 out Colombia’s 32 departments. The floods in the Caribbean region of La Mojana were especially severe, and endangered approximately 350,000 people who depend on agriculture for their livelihood. La Mojana, spreads throughout four departments crossed by major rivers that overflow easily during winter. Early forecasts indicated this region was going to be flooded throughout 2007 due to “La Niña”, a meteorological phenomenon that prolongs heavy rainfall. The Government of Colombia declared this an emergency and called upon the United Nations System to provide further assistance to cover water and sanitation (WatSan), shelter and food needs. Thus, jointly with international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and in close coordination and collaboration with national and local authorities and rescue organisms like the Colombian Red Cross, three project proposals were submitted by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

The devastating impacts of flooding are multi-facted. Floods increase the probability of outbreaks of water-borne diseases, disrupt school attendance, destroy and damage houses and infrastructure, kill livestock and affect the render land useless for agriculture. They even also intensify local conflicts by contributing to looting, recruitment of youths and children, increasing tensions within and among communities.

The humanitarian community’s interventions in 2007 were based upon a comprehensive needs assessment that was carried out with technical assistance provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). United Nations agencies and NGOs (Oxfam GB, CISP and Action Against Hunger), jointly with the National Directorate for Disaster Prevention and Response (DPAD), the Colombian Red Cross and the Civil Defence, conducted two inter-agency missions to La Mojana and Cordoba regions. The main humanitarian gaps identified were:

- Food Assistance: Emergency food aid delivery to address the needs of approximately 40,000 beneficiaries;
- Water and Sanitation (WatSan): Safe access to water sources and sanitation equipment to dispose excretas and solids required to address the needs of approximately 12,500 persons in shelters and rural school facilities;
- Shelter: Construction materials for temporary shelters needed, particularly for families (5,000 persons) that refuse to leave their houses in fear of looting.

Beneficiaries consisted of population settled in schools and shelters in rural areas; nursing and pregnant women, families with children below the age of five and elder people at high sanitation and health-related risks. Emergency response activities were coupled with social support, community cohesion and capacity building activities (e.g. trainings, planning, raising awareness).

Sustainability was promoted by involving local authorities and defining their roles with regards to shelter care and management. Specifically, the mayors’ offices committed to assuming shelter management and partial running costs throughout 2008, while still providing direct assistance and continued support to beneficiary families. Further to these interventions, the United Nations and several NGOs are currently concerned with

promoting better prevention and post-emergency recovery strategies towards cementing durable solutions. However, La Mojana remains vulnerable; whole communities continue to live in unfit houses and are reluctant to relocate to safer areas.

Total amount of humanitarian funding required and received (per reporting year)	Required: <u>\$2,805,517</u> Received: <u>\$2,292,085</u>			
Total amount of CERF funding received by funding window	Rapid Response: <u>\$2,253,044</u> Grand Total: <u>\$2,253,044</u>			
Total amount of CERF funding for direct UN agency/IOM implementation and total amount forwarded to implementing partners	Total UN agencies/IOM: <u>\$0.00</u> Total implementing partners: <u>\$2,253,044</u>			
Approximate total number of beneficiaries reached with CERF funding (disaggregated by sex/age if possible)	Total	under 5 years of age	Female (If available)	Male (If available)
	Shelter: 15,142 Food: 61,018 WatSan: 32,539 TOTAL: 108,699	36,777	46,807	49,692
Geographic areas of implementation	Cordoba Department and La Mojana Region in the Caribbean of Colombia			

NOTE: An additional \$ 500,000 was provided by UNICEF and WFP to ensure the total required funding. This amount corresponds to capacity building activities on the side (e.g. trainings, awareness raising, etc).

II. Coordination and Partnership Building

(a) Decision-making process:

Requests for disaster-response funds from CERF were relayed through the UN Emergency Technical Team Colombia (UNETT). An inter-agency needs assessment based on joint fact-finding missions was conducted to identify needs, gaps and potential beneficiary population targets. Since 2006, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) established local criteria for CERF proposals, requiring United Nations and non-United Nations implementation arrangements through international non-governmental organizations that are part of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) / UNETT. Thus, funds were transferred to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) and directly implemented through CISP, Oxfam GB and Action against Hunger, respectively. The needs assessment identified needs and gaps across other sectors (i.e. housing, health, education, etc.), which were disseminated and shared with other United Nations agencies and government authorities. Requests were technically approved by UNETT members prior to endorsement of the Humanitarian Coordinator. OCHA facilitated all tasks and decision-making procedures leading to the final requests (i.e. needs assessment, CERF application guidelines, application, monitoring and reporting tasks). The decision to apply for CERF funding came after an explicit request from the Government of Colombia to the United Nations, considering the magnitude of floods vs. institutional response capacity.

(b) Coordination amongst the humanitarian country team

OCHA expanded UNETT and coordinated the humanitarian response to natural disasters. UNETT was traditionally integrated by United Nations agencies and focused mostly on response to emergencies. The initial CERF allocation of \$2 million in 2006 for rapid response was implemented under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee mechanism. The UNETT, facilitated by the OCHA and under the aegis of the Humanitarian

Coordinator, managed not only to implement CERF resources for rapid response to natural disasters, but also to engage in active discussions on how to integrate prevention and recovery as pillars of UNETT's work. Consequently, the humanitarian country team has fine-tuned its capacity to address disaster-driven emergencies immediate relief, prevention and post-emergency recovery.

As a result of expanded coordination with non-governmental organizations and government agencies nationally and locally, as well as with the Colombian Red Cross, joint needs assessments and field missions were conducted, detailing the needs of over 350,000 victims.

Gaps in the Government's response were discussed with authorities and the National Government officially requested additional support from the United Nations for humanitarian assistance. Common information reduced costs in conducting and sharing a needs assessment in affected municipalities. Logistic costs have also been reduced through enhanced coordination. Joint field missions have become a standard procedure of the international humanitarian response to natural disasters, involving United Nations and non-United Nations actors.

(c) Partnerships

CERF funds were allocated in July for the natural disasters response, implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), CISP, Oxfam GB, Action against Hunger and the Colombian Red Cross, across shelter, food aid and WatSan. UNETT required numerous meetings and increased efforts in bringing common information to the table prior to submitting applications¹. These meetings, however, were also conducive to building trust between authorities and agencies/organisations.

Expanding the UNETT increased the level of commitment among the United Nations, NGOs and the government, and helped to build confidence with the authorities. Governmental agencies tasked with disaster response became key interlocutors at the capital and field levels, therefore increasing the communities' trust in humanitarian assistance activities on the ground. Synergies and coordination with authorities enabled the implementation of efficient, timely and non-duplicative actions. Under this coordination scheme, international humanitarian response is more prone to being formally requested by and regarded as supplemental by the National Government in a welcoming and positive way. Joint projects like the ones implemented with CERF funds and expanded participation provided leverage for motivating and improving overall humanitarian coordination.

Coordination with the General Officer Commander (GoC) and United Nations agencies allowed agencies and other partners to increase their capacity to work in the field through strengthening of government and NGO relationships. Every agency involved was able to show its technical capacity and expertise in the field, and furthermore develop a complete and multi-partner response to the consequences from flooding in Cordoba and La Mojana.

The simultaneity of the actions financed by the CERF and the coordination among the United Nations agencies, implementing non-governmental organizations, national and local governments and emergency committees from each municipality were key factors for the timeliness and positive impact of the intervention and achievement of the goals. The projects actually surpassed their intended coverage by approximately 20 percent, and limited diseases associated with the poor quality of water within this particular area of the country.

(d) Prioritization process:

During the needs assessment of beneficiary communities the following challenges were encountered in terms of project development and settings:

- Most beneficiaries are found in zones that are difficult to access. The main means of communication within the affected region are small and medium sized streams and rivers; municipality centres are distant from the flooded areas.

¹ Participants to these meetings are IOM, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, UNDP, UNDSS, UNHCR, Oxfam, Colombian Red Cross, National Disaster Response Directorate, FAO, OCHA, OFDA, CISP, UNFPA.

- The precarious state, or even lack, of services for the population in these isolated regions demands that inhabitants receive assistance in multiple areas and issues. Flood victims suffered from unsatisfied basic needs even before the floods; these needs were worsened by flooding.
- The threat of new and continuous rain, kept a level of awareness between project partners and stakeholders, along with the threat of an increasing number of flood victims.

Sectors were prioritised as a result of findings obtained through the joint needs assessment. As said, though needs were observed across several sectors, CERF funds enabled to precisely complement governmental response. At the wake of this emergency, rural communities became isolated and very difficult to reach. Agricultural communities were the most affected as they lost their subsistence capacities and became rapidly exposed to risks derived from precarious water and sanitation conditions, inadequate housing and food insecurity. Thus, while institutional response provided a paramount portion of aid, these projects focused on filling response gaps to save the lives of those facing deadly risks.

III. Implementation and Results

Rapid Response projects

Shelter needs were addressed jointly by IOM and CISP (Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli), in close coordination with UNICEF, OCHA, WFP, the Disaster Prevention and Assistance Directorate of Colombia, the Civil Defence and the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF). In addition, IOM also worked with local non-governmental organization Colombia Inmediata, a renowned emergency assistance organisation.

The Shelter Project made possible the construction of 16 urban and rural shelters on stilts equipped to protect 192 families from hazardous and unsanitary conditions. Construction and furnishing was done under three months in Cordoba and La Mojana. Given the construction method, which allows for easy assembly and disassembly (i.e. reusable), families were provided with dignified housing during the emergency, which enabled them to stabilise their living and sanitary conditions, thus preventing respiratory and infectious diseases. Children were also able to resume school earlier than anticipated.

The Food Project implemented by WFP and Action against Hunger (ACF), targeted areas with extreme access difficulties (i.e. people who lost their livelihoods and had no access to food). The initial assessment targeted 14,192 families out of which twelve thousand were the ultimate beneficiaries (61,000 persons). Gender equity was sought since the outset (i.e. 29,060 women and 31,958 men). In total, 373 communities throughout eleven municipalities were attended. The project was marked by its community-based approach. Each food delivery was coupled with guidance on the use and disposal of packaging, thus contributing to preserve and protect the environment. It is worth pointing out that during the implementation, as the emergency evolved, the number of persons varied from one delivery to the other. In summary, the first delivery covered 11,296 families (56,482 persons) and the second 10,704 (53,518 persons).

And finally, the Water and Sanitation (WatSan) Project implemented by UNICEF and Oxfam GB (plus the Colombian Red Cross) focused on the provision of safe drinking water to 5,022 families. It is worth noting that the Government of Colombia delivered water and sanitation assistance mostly to urban beneficiaries and/or victims gathered at shelters. Thus, the WatSan Project sought to expand coverage to rural victims at high risk of getting gastrointestinal diseases. In addition, the Water and Sanitation Project conducted water analyses, repaired water systems, provided water storage tanks, filters and water treatment inputs. Similarly, sanitary units for the most affected families and rural school facilities, delivered community tool kits for managing and disposing solid wastes, hygiene and shelter cleaning kits, and training on hygiene and healthcare to affected communities as part as the community-based approach.

(a) Monitoring and Evaluation

Lead agencies and implementing partners assigned experts to provide technical assistance and continued coordination in liaison with the Colombian Red Cross and local governments. In this way, guidance and documentation as to the evolution of the emergency and the implementing process was ensured in all sectors (i.e. Water and Sanitation, Shelter, and Food Assistance).

Monitoring instruments were also used to take stock of the projects' impact. On the one side, OCHA facilitated its information management capacities, while onsite staff collected further data and information and sent periodic reports regarding the stage of the implementing process, reached beneficiaries, supplies provided, etc. Follow-up activities were also jointly conducted and coordinated from a base station in the nearby city of Sincelejo. For example, joint missions were conducted to develop a video documentary of the implementing process (available at www.colombiassh.org); and shelter management, food delivery and water safety assessments were also conducted through dedicated staff that were either contracted (e.g. two social workers and one architect were deployed by International Organization for Migration to monitor the implementation of the project for a period of 40 days) or deployed by agencies and implementing partners. These reports were widely disseminated and discussed among UNETT participants.

(b) Initiatives that complemented CERF-funded projects

CERF resources made possible a coordinated humanitarian response between the government and the humanitarian organisations, and facilitated the leveraging of additional resources from the government and United Nations System agencies and NGOs participating in the response to the rainy season emergency. They also contributed to the consolidation of the Water and Sanitation Group.

Thanks to this CERF allocation, UNICEF further requested and received approval from UNICEF headquarters the assignation of \$350,000 in emergency resources earmarked for the attention of children and adolescents in health, nutrition, education, protection, hygiene education and technical assistance in water and environmental sanitation, advocacy and social mobilisation. Oxfam GB requested \$200,000 from its donors for complementary actions, and \$400,000 for supervision, monitoring and continuity of actions during the three months following the end of the intervention financed with CERF resources.

Under OCHA leadership, the humanitarian organisations participating in the rainy season emergency response developed strategies for advocacy at the national and municipal level, and for social mobilisation centred on the needs of the affected population. The actions financed with CERF resources were disseminated through the media.

CERF projects provided a prompt and integral response to the emergency suffered by people in Córdoba, Bolívar and Sucre. The shelters provided an adequate and dignified setting for flood victims while they could return to their original homes. Diseases were prevented, and children were able to return to school, after the evacuation of the first shelters situated in school facilities. This type of response from United Nations agencies motivated local mayor's offices to actively take part in response efforts by assuming direct management of the shelters, assisting families, scheduling health assistance sessions and coordinating the collection of waste and disposal. Local mayor offices involved other national and local authorities and entities that are engaged in emergency assistance. The support from the Colombian Family Welfare Institute to under-aged children was crucial, because approximately 50 percent of beneficiaries were under-aged children. The CERF projects also put into motion the efforts of government and State authorities, stimulating the allocation of physical and human resources in the disaster area. In addition, local Civil Defence offices from the emergency zones benefited through strengthening of its leadership role.

IV. Lessons learned

The rapid assessment of needs performed in coordination with authorities and the affected population permitted an adequate prioritisation of the sectors and geographic areas of intervention, and was a decisive factor in achieving the desired timeliness, coverage and positive impact.

Identification and focalisation of the victim populations least attended by State agencies made possible the effective amplification of coverage, reduced the duplication of actions and optimised the use of available resources. The project formulation process and CERF resources were very important in needs identification and focalisation.

The implementation of simultaneous and concurrent actions in shelter, water and sanitation and feeding contributed effectively to reducing the risk of disease and death from diseases like diarrhoea caused by poor quality water and malnutrition – especially in the child population.

Monitoring the quality of water, including the adequate disposal of solid wastes and hygienic practices should be continued following the emergency, with the commitment of local authorities and the community. This is being done currently with complementary resources secured by United Nations Children's Fund and OXFAM.

The lessons learned in the emergency period should serve to improve the quality of life of the intervened community and its ability to face the rainy season emergencies that are repeated every year.

The most appropriate water treatment system for rural areas and dispersed communities whose only source is the river is to treat the water with coagulant, and to use vela or eco filters for the purification process. A manual extraction pump called PECO 1 was developed for extracting sludge from silos or septic tanks in the zone, as a project contribution to the rural communities; this should serve for future interventions and to maintain wells clean when the rainy season starts.

The CERF-funded shelters need to be kept and standing, in order to provide emergency shelters for future rainy seasons. This will give the General Officer Commander tools for emergency response that currently lack due to scarce funding and capacity to permanently resettle flood victims in a short term.

The risk of flooding due to heavy rain continues to be a threat to local homes, families and goods in the potential flood region. During dry seasons, the shelters can be used for various activities that involve the community.

Alliances and synergies with non-governmental organizations and private partners kept costs low, thereby exceeding expected results and activities, as it was demonstrated through alliances with implementing partners, which resulted in lower expenditure costs and allowed an increase in housing for beneficiaries by increasing shelter size.

Infrastructure projects that require construction, installation and furnishing of shelters, require social assistance to beneficiaries and local authorities on awareness and training, to strengthen community ties and promote an adequate coexistence.

V. Results

Sector	CERF projects per sector	Amount disbursed	Beneficiaries (by sex/age)	Imp. Partners	Expected Results/Outcomes	Actual results and/or improvements
Shelter IOM	“Shelter for flood-affected victims in Cordoba and La Mojana” (07-IOM-013)	\$791,693	Total: 15,142 Female: 12.1 percent Male: 7.54 percent Children: 80.36 percent	CISP Italy	i. 165 families are supplied with 16 fully equipped shelters and trained on rules and guidelines on living and caring for the shelters ii. Single-family shelters improved through roof supply iii. Children return to school and retake classes (Schools were used as temporary shelters)	i. 192 families ii. 1,650 families iii. 5,932 children
Food WFP	“Food distribution for flood-affected victims in Cordoba and La Mojana” (07-WFP-043)	\$906,840	Total: 61,018 Female: 47.63 Percent Male: 52.37 Percent Under five: 19 percent	AAH Spain	i. WFP food rations delivered to targeted beneficiaries to complement their daily nutritional requirements for 90 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 186 isolated rural communities supported with food assistance, complementing shelter and WatSan projects • Procurement and distribution of 761Mt of food jointly with AAH-Spain, fully coordinated with local governmental emergency teams • 8,000 families were targeted in an ECHO-supported food security project aiming to recover their livelihoods with small-crops projects

Sector	CERF projects per sector	Amount disbursed	Beneficiaries (by sex/age)	Imp. Partners	Expected Results/Outcomes	Actual results and/or improvements
WatSan UNICEF	“Safe drinking water and WatSan solutions for flood-affected victims in Cordoba and La Mojana” (07-CEF-049)	\$554,510	Total: 32,539 Female: 48.9 percent Male: 51 percent Under five: 40 percent	Oxfam GB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Safe drinking water provided to targeted beneficiaries: 5,022 families, three rural water systems repaired, provision of 2,625 water storage tanks, 1,041 filters, 930 litres of chlorine and 872 kilos of sulphate for water treatment ii. Basic sanitation and hygiene solutions delivered to targeted beneficiaries: provision and repair of sanitary installations, 78 individual family units and 14 school sanitary units, provision of 14 community toolkits for managing and disposing solid wastes, 2,535 family hygiene kits, 48 shelter cleaning kits, training and material on hygiene and healthcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Coverage surpassed the target by 20 percent. ii. Safe drinking water ensured to targeted families iii. Basic sanitation and hygiene solutions improved living conditions of 1,038 affected families, 6,590 children in 14 schools; 4,000 persons, including community leaders, acquired skills and knowledge for improving hygiene and preventing diseases in their communities

VI. CERF in action

“Water went by”

Martha had to cook today for twelve families, including her own. She and her neighbours have shared this activity, since the heavy rains flooded the small locality where she lives, called San Sebastian, in the Municipality of Lorica, northern Colombia. She and other families had to abandon their homes. Cooking is different today thanks to the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF); now she does not use a wooden stove, smothered by smoke in the middle of the community school yard. Today she cooks with a gas stove in the wide and comfortable shelter kitchen built to adequately accommodate families that have not been able to return to their flooded homes.

Martha, her family and neighbours had to take refuge in community schools before the shelters were built with the technical assistance from IOM and the Italian NGO CISP. “We lived in bad conditions. We could not do our basic needs, we had to go to our flooded homes to do so” remembers Martha. “We also had to cook with wooden stoves and the smoke damages our lungs”.

Amongst other causes, overcrowding worsened the lives of flood victims. Relations between community members were increasingly tense as the days went by, due to the use of school facilities as shelters that impeded local children and youths to normally go to class.

The design and construction of temporary shelters commenced, thanks to CERF funding; it provided the zone with a response to the emergency, as well as reusable shelters for future natural disasters. Sphere Project standards were incorporated in shelter design and construction: A minimum area of 3.5 square metres per person, safe and private separations between sexes, age groups and families; additional spaces for daily subsistence activities. The shelters were made from wooden panels, with capacity for twelve families, each one residing in separate modules. The designs include a kitchen and sanitary battery; they are built on stilts, to provide safety and well-being of habitants in case of future floods. The shelters include a system to collect and distribute rainwater, as well as a waste water treatment system.

“We feel pretty good here” says Martha, whilst she continues to cook lunch for twelve families that cohabit in one of the sixteen shelters built in the zone and temporarily accommodates 192 families. Martha knows that the shelter is not her home; despite improved conditions, everyday she borrows a shovel and with it she goes to her house to clean sand, mud and bad memories that floods left behind.



1. Shelters provide private spaces for each family; 2. Martha cooking lunch in her shelter kitchen; 3. 16 shelters lodged 192 families

“Ghost town”

From the highway connecting Cereté with Lorica, you can begin to see some signs of the degree of affectation of the population inhabiting the communities in this zone of the department of Córdoba. This is the case of Palo de Agua, a community in the municipality of Lorica whose name paradoxically coincides with the situation in the town these days. Although the trunks of the coconut palms remain standing, resisting the water without losing their majesty, the crops of corn and plantains have lost the battle: they are completely devastated. What before

was fertile land for growing crops and raising cattle today looks like a swamp, where several men in search of sustenance for themselves and their families try to fish out any animal the current has dragged along. That is the panorama that announces arrival in Palo de Agua.

To reach this village of approximately 1,200 inhabitants you have to cross the river on a ferry raft built with support from the Diocese of Montería to facilitate access to the community. However, when crossing the river these days there is no visible shore at which to arrive. Instead of firm land, upon reaching Palo de Agua you find a road build of sacks of sand and stones rising slightly above water level and leading visitors arriving on the raft to one of the few parts of town that are not covered by water. Since last June 27, the streets of Palo de Agua can only be traversed in canoes.

On the bit of land that looks like an island at the entrance to the town, a couple of children are running around a skinny, dirty dog, while a group of adults converse and while away the day. In that same space, which seems to have become the town's gathering place since the water took over the streets, Jerson and Hugo, two 16-year-old youths, spend the afternoon chatting, reclined on the wall of a store, without much to do. But Jerson and Hugo are no exception. Since the emergency commenced in Palo de Agua, neither the youths nor the children have anything to occupy their time, since school had to be suspended when two of the Palo de Agua school's three buildings flooded, and the one that was not affected is being used as a shelter.

The two youths are in their final year of secondary school, and before the town flooded they were getting training to take the State Examination for admission to Higher Education (ICFES). But since the emergency the preparation of young people for the exams has stopped, and in anticipation of the intensification of the rainy season there is a possibility that school will not be reinitiated in time to make up for the missed hours. According to the Lorica Secretariat of Education, this is one of the matters that most worry the departmental administration. Jerson wants to study for a degree in the hotel and tourism field, and has plans to travel to Montería when he graduates from secondary school, to attend university. For his part, Hugo wants to study chemistry, and use his aptitudes in this area. However, the water has their plans on hold, because in addition to difficulties passing the State test and finishing the school year, the economic situation in both homes, and in general for all the inhabitants of Palo de Agua, is critical because of the flood. Jerson's father is an electrician and has had almost no work for more than two months. Similarly, the pawn shop where Hugo's father works has not had any business during this period.

The town is totally inundated, the school is closed, the sewerage system has collapsed completely, the quality of water reaching the town is deficient, food is scarce and it is impossible to work in agriculture, which is one of the town's main economic activities. There have been various cases of chickenpox, there are dengue alerts and in general the population is suffering from diseases caused by deficient water quality and moisture in the houses. Hugo had a fever and headache for a couple of days, and now his mother has the same symptoms.

So amid this inert panorama, Jerson and Hugo do not have much hope for the situation's improving. Like the town's other inhabitants, they have no other option than to wait for the days to pass. The afternoon advances, and those who do not live in Palo de Agua once again climb onto the raft to cross the river and return home. The lights go on inside the houses, while from the raft the town gets smaller and smaller. The desolation that invades the town in daytime is accentuated by the fall of night, and Palo de Agua takes on the appearance of a ghost town, a town that could disappear at any moment. The river's current could disappear it.



Food assistance for flood-affected victims

Nelsie Piñeres is in her mid 40s. She and her family live in rural areas of El Chiqui, a village located some 15 kilometres away from the municipality of San Bernardo del Viento, province of Cordoba, northern Colombia.

One night, in June 2007, their life suddenly changed. Their humble house and the little piece of land that provided for all of them were no longer there. The floods took everything.

“We used to be poor, but after the floods I don’t know what we are now! It was so strong that my two children had to go to school almost naked, keeping their cloths in a plastic bag so they could literally swim to school. We moved to a higher area waiting for the water to recede, and here we are, still waiting” says Nelsie.

“The Government and WFP are helping us, I must say. They gave us enough food for one month and that’s a big change. This food brings hope, ‘cause at least now we can focus on rebuild our houses, our crops and our life. Being poor is one thing, but being poor surrounded by nothing but water is another. Thanks god we can start over again”.²

² <http://es.youtube.com/watch?v=iBTMxppTkZU&feature=related> Atención de emergencias en Colombia



Annex: further pictures

Videos of these CERF projects were also produced by WFP and IOM with OCHA's technical support. These were broadcasted by CNN (Spanish version for LA) and can be viewed at OCHA Colombia's website (<http://www.colombiassh.org/site/spip.php?article287> and <http://www.colombiassh.org/site/spip.php?article193>).



List of Acronyms

ACF- Action Contre La Faim (Action Against Hunger)

CERF –Central Emergency Response Fund

CISP- Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli

CRC- Colombian Red Cross

DPAD- National Directorate for Disaster Prevention and Response

GoC -General Officer Commander

HC- Humanitarian Coordinator

IASC- Inter-Agency Standing Committee

ICBF- Colombian Family Welfare Institute

ICFES- State Examination for Admission to Higher Education

IOM- International Organization for Migration

OCHA-Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UNCT-United Nations Country Team

UNETT- United Nations Emergency Technical Team

WATSAN -Water and Sanitation